


# Country of the Week: Malawi

Malawi has an abundance of beautiful landscapes spanning dramatic river valleys, forested highlands, and sensational plateaus. It is also home to one of the largest lakes in the world, Lake Malawi, where visitors are often surprised to find palm-fringed shores that border a tropical paradise as far as the eye can see.

This natural beauty is paired with exceptionally warm-hearted people who have inspired the country's nickname, the "Warm Heart of Africa." Malawians greet every visitor and neighbor with smiles and genuine hospitality. It's no surprise to discover that Malawi's YALI Network members are deeply involved in strengthening their communities, which is why we're naming Malawi #CountryoftheWeek.


Keep reading to discover three featured members striving to better the lives of women and girls, initiate educational and entrepreneurial programs, and provide environmental waste management solutions in their local communities.

Our first featured YALI Network member, Ulala Kondowe, lives in Blantyre and believes the rights of women and girls are imperative to her community's success. 

Ulala has initiated a club called the Chichiri Girls Network with the goal of helping young girls excel in school. "I founded the club to provide guidance and counseling to girls through a mentorship program," she states. The club has hosted a number of events, including STEM education and career counseling, as well as an International Women's Day celebration that hosted the [Women Judges Association of Malawi](#). "These events give girls the hope they need to succeed in life, as well as combat everyday challenges."


As a role model, Ulala empowers young women by building their self-confidence and educating them about personal rights. She understands that investing in Malawi's youth helps build a magnificent future for her nation—one in which all women are able to positively contribute to their community. Ulala earned a [YALI Network Online Course](#) certificate in Understanding the Rights of Women and Girls and has hosted two #YALILearns events in her community.

Our next featured member, Madalitso Mwaungulu, comes from Lilongwe where he shares entrepreneurial, leadership, and life management skills with his community.

Madalitso values the connections he has made through the YALI Network, explaining, "I have  met many capable peers through the YALI Network, and I am able to collaboratively brainstorm and develop new initiatives that positively impact our community." One of these initiatives is BeHOPE, which exposes young people to quality resources and to mentors who uplift and encourage youth to become future leaders. "Being a YALI Network member has enabled me to inspire our community's young people to do more and become more."

Hosting [YALILearns](#) events has given Madalitso a platform from which to spread awareness about the importance of education — an issue he feels strongly about. "This has a trickle-down effect in our community, and it makes a collective impact on society," he says. "When we sit down together to address the social ills in our community, we can conceptualize better solutions."

Madalisto has earned several YALI Network Online Course certificates, including one for *Community Organizing for Action* and has hosted four #YALILearns events.

Our last featured YALI Network member, Michael Mhango, comes from Zomba, where he works to provide women with economically sustainable skills and improve his local community. 

Michael is a 2016-2017 Global Health Corps Fellow, and he joined the YALI Network to pursue his passion for civic leadership. “I completed all the [YALI Network Online Courses](#), which helped me establish 11 women’s village and savings loans groups,” he says. “The women in these groups were also involved in a sustainability project in which they learn to cook with foods locally available in the Karonga District” (pictured above).

After attending a YALI Network event, Maestros Go Green Project Launch, Michael was inspired to establish his own social enterprise, Dziko Lathu, which focuses on environmental waste management. This exciting project allows Michael to develop his business and entrepreneurial skills, in addition to bettering his home.

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